

Testimony of Michael Williams before the Energy and Technology Committee

In support of:

- SB 570: An Act Concerning Electric Savings and Fixed Bill Fees
- HB 6014: An Act Concerning Electric Distribution Companies Residential Fixed Customer Charge

Submitted by: Michael Williams of Coventry, CT. February 24, 2015

Senator Paul Doyle, Representative Lonnie Reed, and Distinguished members of the committee:

I am testifying in support of SB 570 and HB 6014. Both of the bills seek reduction, and capping, of the fixed fees that electric utilities presently charge their customers on a monthly basis. I am certain that either bill would receive overwhelming bi-partisan support. The legislation that is passed should also be effective January 1, 2015.

In December 2014, the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) approved CL&P's request to increase the fixed portion of their bill that all residents pay. As you are aware it was raised to \$19.25 per month from their previous rate of \$16.00 per month. Like most people, I am outraged that it was increased at all - especially since a review of some area electric companies yields that they charge significantly lower rates:

- Western Mass Electric has a fixed charge of \$6.00
- Boston Edison has a fixed charge of \$6.43
- Public Service of New Hampshire has a fixed charge of \$12.39.

Adding insult to injury, all three are Northeast Utilities (NU) companies - as is CL&P.

It was also reported by the Journal Inquirer (Dec 18, 2014) that PURA stated "the fixed charge may increase even more with CL&P's next rate application".

Since the PURA approval in December I have made many phone calls to various agencies and legislators, only to become increasingly frustrated with the results. In fact, a representative of PURA pointed out to me that they rejected CL&P's original request of \$25.50. I do not believe that merely accepting the notion of PURA's reduction to CL&P's original request of \$25.50 per month (representing a 60% increase) to the approved rate of \$19.25 per month (a 20% increase) is anything that the consumer should be overjoyed with, or tolerated. This increase is still indefensibly unjust and cannot be considered relief. **After all, when was the last time you received a 20% pay raise ?**

If legislation is not put into place to cap the fixed charge, then I fear CL&P will continue to seek increases to this portion of their bill. It should it be capped - and be reduced - from the recently approved \$19.25 per month, bringing CL&P's fixed rate in line with other area NU companies that CL&P is part of.

Sincerely,
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